

Matthew C. Sharpe, NPP
1577 South Avenue
Rochester, NY 14620
(585) 709-8807

TELEHEALTH POLICY

Introduction

Telehealth services with Matthew C. Sharpe, NPP are intended to provide high-quality psychiatric care remotely while reducing barriers to care and maximizing convenience and flexibility. Originally telehealth services were implemented in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic out of necessity to continue care.

Definition

Telehealth is a way to visit with the healthcare provider by use of technology without requiring that the healthcare provider and patient be at the same location at the time of the appointment.

Scope

As the sole provider in the practice this policy covers Matthew C. Sharpe, NPP and patients engaged in telehealth services with this provider. The patient shall be a resident of New York State or currently be living in New York State (e.g., to attend college) at the time of the telehealth session.

Technology

Telehealth will occur utilizing a HIPAA-compliant telecommunications platform doxy.me which allows for real-time auditory and visual interaction between the provider and the patient. A secure WiFi network will be utilized. In the event of internet or other technological difficulty, telehealth services may be delivered by auditory only (i.e., telephone) communication. In cases where a patient has difficulty utilizing doxy.me, a reasonable effort will be made to help assist them to utilize it (when appropriate, with patient consent, the patient may allow for a surrogate to help them get started with a doxy.me session).

Potential Risks

- Since the provider and the patient will not be in the same room, the feel of the session may not be the same as it would be if the visit were to occur face-to-face in person.
- Technical problems may interrupt or stop an ongoing session or stop a session from beginning on time.
- There is a chance that the provider may not be able to assess the patient as completely as they would in person. While the impact of this, in most cases, should be minimal there is a chance that inability to see the patient may impact the assessment and certain tools that may be used in the office will not be able to be used remotely (e.g., blood pressure monitoring, scale for weighing, etc.).
- Because the session does not occur in the office, there is a risk that others in the patient's environment may overhear what is being said.

Appropriate Patients

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Provided the patient has provided consent, most patients who can be seen in the office can be seen safely via telehealth. The provider will use his professional judgment to determine eligibility on a case-by-case basis. Examples of patients not appropriate for telehealth are those that require in-office physical assessment (e.g., patients receiving Spravato) and patients who have physical or mental limitations that would make meaningful interaction difficult (e.g., a patient who is very hard of hearing, a patient too confused by the technology to interact naturally over telehealth). On a case-by-case basis, any patient who the provider feels would benefit significantly more from an in person visit will be encouraged to do so.

Setting

The provider will conduct all telehealth sessions from his office at 1577 South Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620. In the unlikely event that there are extenuating circumstances, the provider will ensure an alternative location that ensures patient privacy and is free of foreseeable distractions. If a location other than the provider's office is used, the patient will be informed and may opt out of meeting without penalty or judgment.

Consent

Patients will be provided with the information related to the risks, potential benefits, and alternatives to decide whether or not to provide informed consent for telehealth. The option for in person appointments will be provided at the initial visit and at each subsequent telehealth visit.

Privacy

Visits will not be recorded by the provider. Patients may not record sessions without provider's knowledge. Patients will be made aware that if people are near them they may hear something that the patient does not want them to know. When using the internet for telehealth, patients are encouraged to use a network that is private and secure.

Scheduling and Cancellation

Appointments can be scheduled, cancelled, and rescheduled following the same policy as in person visits.

Billing and Payment

Telehealth services will be subject to the same billing policies as in-person visits. Patients should consult their insurance providers for coverage details.

Record Keeping

Medical records will be maintained for telehealth visits in the same manner as in-person visits.

Emergency Procedures

In the case of an urgent need, in office visits will be offered. In a true emergency, telehealth services are not a suitable substitute for immediate in-person evaluation and treatment. Patients will be advised to

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go to the nearest emergency room and/or access through emergency services (i.e., Lifeline, Mobile Crisis Team, 911) will be facilitated.

Prescriptions

When medically appropriate, medications may be prescribed to treat mental health conditions within the scope of practice of Matthew C. Sharpe, NPP via telehealth.

Controlled Substance Prescriptions

As with prescriptions which are not scheduled by the DEA, controlled substances will be prescribed when medically necessary via telehealth when consistent with federal and state laws. Specifically, patients established with the provider prior to the public health emergency (Covid-19 state of emergency) who have been seen in person will be prescribed controlled substances if appropriate given their medical conditions.

Patients who were first seen by telehealth during the pandemic (and prior to November 11, 2023) are encouraged to be seen in person at least once. If such patients are/were prescribed a controlled substance during the pandemic they will be required to be seen in person and will no longer be able to receive controlled substances after November 11, 2024. Patients seen for the first time on or after November 11, 2023 must be seen in person prior to a controlled substance being prescribed.

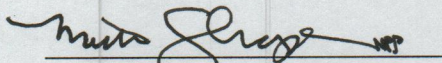
Frequency of Visits

As with traditional, in person visits, it is expected that patients who are primarily or exclusively seen via telehealth be seen at least once every three months. More frequent visits will be recommended (or in certain circumstances required) as clinically indicated.

Are Telehealth Visits Required?

No. Absolutely not. Patients are given the option for in person visits instead of telehealth for any reason whatsoever (or no reason at all beyond preference).

This policy is in accordance with federal and state laws regarding telehealth and is subject to change. All staff and patients are expected to comply with this policy. For any questions or clarifications regarding this Telehealth Policy, please contact Matthew Sharpe at (585) 709-8807.


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